

Smoke Signals

►PHOTOS ON THE BACK COVER

The photographs on the back cover of this edition were provided by Mr Ron Riley of Broken Hill and a member of the Aborigines' Advisory Council. The photo at the top of the page was taken in about 1950 at Box Vale, via White Cliffs. Those appearing in the picture, from left to right, are: Margaret Quayle, Dorothy Barlow, Vera Quayle, Vincent Quayle, Laurie Quayle, Cyril Hennessy, Bert Brown (now deceased), Kay Quayle, Jack Melrose, Corral Hennessy, and Raeline Quayle. The picture at the bottom, taken at Wanarring in about 1931, includes Henry Crowe (now deceased), Victor Dutton, Hilda Dutton, and Ethel Crowe (deceased). The third photo shows Ian Landers (deceased) and Ron Riley at Grassmere station, near Broken Hill, in 1949.

►UNCONSCIOUS PREJUDICE

In June there was a great deal of publicity and furore surrounding the withdrawal of two white debutantes from a ball in Nanango, Queensland, where Senator Bonner was to be the guest of honour to whom the debts would be presented. In the wake of this the press was deluged with a rash of letters expressing outrage over the Nanango incident. The authors of some of these letters, however, failed to realize that their own attitudes were not beyond repute. One such correspondent, for instance, complained that "It made me furious—who do they (the parents of the two debts who withdrew) think they are?"; and then went on to assert: "As for Senator Bonner, I would be proud to shake his hand for he has had the courage to fight for the position he now holds. Did he ask to be born black?" A correspondent in another paper began her letter with the words "I would like to apologize to Senator Bonner on behalf of the parents of the debts . . . Have these parents realized that this country did, and does still in my opinion, belong to the dark-skinned people and we, the whites, are the intruders"; and then went on to add: "I wonder how these parents would feel if Senator Bonner was to choose who he shakes hands with? Have they thought, 'There, but for the Grace of God, go I!'"

►CASSIDY SAMUELS—TRACKER

Cassidy Samuels whose picture appears on this page, reckons his age at "about 60". He was born at Singleton but now lives at West Brewarrina. Over the past 3 years the local police have

increasingly sought the use of his considerable skills as a tracker. This is not a new experience for Cassidy who learned the technique from "the old folks" and has used it in the past "mostly to track game". One local admirer claimed Cassidy's skill is such that "he could track you on a bitumen road". When he's not assisting the police Cassidy often spends his time tracking and hunting porcupines and pigs. Porcupines, he says, are hard to follow because they leave the same tracks whether they are travelling forwards or backwards. "You track them", says Cassidy, "by looking at how the bush has been disturbed". He claims to have once tracked a man for 15-20 miles across country. "Sometimes you loose the track", he says, "and then you look around till you pick it up again. If you can't see the footprints you look for sticks that have been moved and tell which way he's going by the direction they have rolled. You can tell the way a car is going because the tyres carry the dust forward in the direction they're going. A man's tracks will tell you the condition he's in. If he's carrying something he's got a stronger walk. If he's weak or leg-weary he drags his feet". Cassidy says he hasn't taught any young people his skills because "they're not interested. Anyway", he claims, "to be a tracker you've got to have good eyesight and lots of patience".

►"I WISH I HAD YOUR JOB"

Wally Byers works as a field officer at Bourke. What follows is an extract from a report he wrote in the local Aboriginal Advancement Association *Newsletter*: "When I'm going around working amongst the Murries there is always somebody who says: I wish I had your job, it seems so easy and the pay is pretty good. Well! I do wish they did have my job, for there is no cream just working for

Cassidy Samuels of Brewarrina

